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THE OBSERVATIONS or REFLECTIONS

On a virulent Sermon preached at Exeter, *on the* 31st *of* January *last; with a Vindication of those now called Whigs and Dissenters, from having any hand in the Murder of King* Charles *the I. which is likewise unjustly charg'd upon the whole Nation by the High-flyers; But justly charged on the High-Flyers in these times.*

February 9. 1709.

Country-m. HEre's a Letter from *Exeter*, Master, with 30th of *January* Entertainment for you.

Obs. What's that, *Roger*? I hope 'tis nothing of a Calves-head, for I never lik'd that sort of Treat.

Country-m. 'Tis something of that Nature, Master, and instead of a Kitchen, was cooked at a Church in that City; But since you don't like the Head, you shall have some of the Brains.

Obs. Come, dish 'em up then, *Roger*.

Country-m. 'Tis thus, Master. On Monday the 31 of *Jan.* one Mr. *A*——, a Person very well known for his virulent Temper, made a Sermon, which from Top to Toe, was an Invective against Dissenters. He confidently asserted, as the Letter says, 'That the 'Dissenters had murther'd more Persons, than 'all the Heathens and Papists together; that 'they were most barbarous and bloody; that 'they would kill the Queen, as they did the 'King, if they could; that they deserv'd to 'be buried alive: nay, says he, 'I had almost 'said they deserve to be damn'd before they 'are dead.

Obs. That looks more like the Brains of a ravening Wolf, than of a Calf, *Roger*: But if such Creatures will strip themselves of their Shepherds-Clothing, who can help it.

Country-m. Wolves indeed, I think, Master. The Letter adds, That many of his Hearers laugh'd all the while that he rav'd thus at the Dissenters; and after Sermon was over, a dissenting Minister being there to hear it, about 200 of the Mob, having their High-Church Blood rais'd by this virulent Declamation, insulted the Gentleman, and followed him in the Streets as he went Home, shouting at him in a barbarous manner.

Obs. A pretty way to convert Dissenters indeed, *Roger*, and an excellent Specimen of High-flying Charity. We may see what such Wolves would do, were not their Teeth struck out by the Toleration-Act, the Moderation of Her Majesty, and of our Revolution Bishops. These are some of the blessed Effects of the uncharitable Principles spread by the *Rehearser*, and his tantivee Brethren, thro' the Nation. This is much of the same Nature with the Mobs we have had an Account of in the *North* of *Scotland*: So that the Infection spreads from *Cornwall* to *Caithness*.

Country-m. But don't you wonder, Master, that a Man should have the Impudence to utter such things any where, but much more from a Pulpit, whence we ought to have nothing delivered, but the Oracles of God?

Obs. Such Men as those never set God before 'em, *Roger*; they serve another Master, and his Work they will do. The Father of Lies inspires his Children with Falshood, Bitterness, and Malice, and teaches them to speak in his own Dialect. I am as much against the barbarous and illegal Treatment King *Charles* the I. met with, as any High-flyer of 'em all, but think the Anniversary appointed to be kept on that Account, ought not to be turn'd to a Madding-day. The Act of Oblivion in King *Charles* the II's Reign, forbad all such Reproaches, and the Equity of it continues, tho' the Time be expir'd: and so much the more, that our Legislators, in order to prevent such fatal Divisions as those which occasion'd that unnatural War, have thought fit to tolerate Dissenters, and never intended they should be the Object of Railing and Slander, nor to have the Mob set upon them, by Invectives from the Pulpit or Press; but 'tis those Mens Business to foment Divisions, to make Way again for Popery and Slavery, as they did formerly. 'Tis very well known, that the Presbyterians in *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*, did universally oppose the Tryal and Murther of that Prince; and they being much the greatest Number of these who are call'd Dissenters, 'tis unjust to charge it upon Dissenters in gross. Every Body knows, that it was an Anarchical Crew, of no fix'd Denomination, who push'd on that Tryal and Murther; and the very Army that broke up the Parliament, protected the Murtherers at the Tryal, and fought under their Conduct against the Kingdom of *Scotland*, who rais'd an Army to rescue the King, and quell'd all those who appear'd for him in *England*, did afterwards continue in King *Charles* the II's Pay, and most of 'em conform'd to the Church; and if we consider, that of all the benefic'd Clergy in *England*, not above 2000 were Non-conformists after the Restoration, it will be found, that four times as many Church-Clergy-Men, as Dissenting Clergy of all Denominations, comply'd with the Courses of those Times. But Men of such hot Heads as that *Exeter* Priest, are too much troubled with Fumes to have Room for clear Thoughts. Passion and Malice are Enemies to Consideration.

Countrey-m. It is certainly so, Master, otherwise this *Orlando Furioso* of a Priest, would not have said what he did. Every Body knows, that the Dissenters are so far from being Enemies to the Queen, that they universally fell in with the Revolution, which settl'd the Succession upon her, when High-Church oppos'd it, were for a Regency to secure the late King's Title, and that of his pretended Son, and pray'd, that her Father might have her Neck to tread on: The Dissenters universally joyn'd in the Association to maintain her Title, when High-Church was for bringing back the late King, with the Pretender, to execute her Majesty, and the late Prince *George* of *Denmark*, as Rebels, and had agreed to levy Troops of High-flying Priests to hallow the Rebellion. 'Tis also well enough known, that the Dissenters did universally abhor the Assassination-Plot, to cut off King *William* and Queen *Mary*, which would have involv'd Her Majesty in the same fate, when high-flying Priests did absolve the Assassins at the Gallows, without any Proof of Repentance for their Crimes. Nor can it be deny'd, that the Presbyterians in *Scotland* did publickly declare for her Majesty, when high flying Priests there encourag'd the *French* King and the Pretender to invade the Countrey, and dethrone Her Majesty; of which they are still big with Expectation.

Obs. We have spent too much Time *Roger*, on such a malicious Trumpeter of Rebellion, were it not to shew the Spirit of the Faction, whose restless Passions and arbitrary Principles make them fly in the Face of the Laws both of God and Man. Moderation is expressly enjoin'd in the Scripture, and has been again

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and again recommended by her Majesty from the Throne: But these Men are resolved to have nothing to do with it, and will not own it to be a Christian Vertue.

Countrey-m. I must beg your Patience, to say a little more upon this Subject, Master; for I am not so much startl'd at what the hot-headed Priest above-mention'd said, as at the Expressions of others on that Day, who have had the Reputation of being moderate Men, and yet could not forbear their Reflexions upon the Revolution: as a painful, expensive, and I know not what Sort of Cure. Is this their Gratitude to their God, and the Great Instrument in his Hand King *William* of glorious Memory, who, by the joint Address of our Lords and Commons, was own'd to have rescu'd the Church of *England* from Popery! It would seem we have People among us, who have pass'd for moderate Churchmen, that think the Cure worse than the Disease, and would rather have run the Risk of Popery and Slavery, than have had their nonsensical Commentaries upon Passive Obedience contradicted.

Obs. I am afraid there's too much Truth in it, *Roger*, and that, as Dr. *Lambert* justly observ'd in his Sermon, on the Anniversary of the *Irish* Rebellion, and Massacre, those Principles are again coming in Fashion. *Ireland* boasts of her having no poysonous Insects, but we have found by Experience, they have poysonous Priests and Lay-men, who do all they can to infect the Vitals of our Constitution, both in Church and State; Witness their *Rehearsals*, their *Dodwells*, their *Higgins's*, their *Rapho* Addresses, and their *Tredagh* Men, *&c.* I think it the Concern of our Government not to let such poysonous Incendaries foment Divisions among us, and represent those of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, as Enemies to her Majesty; with whose Loyalty she has been graciously pleas'd to declare her self satisfy'd, as all the World has Reason to be, since they have on all Occasions, ventur'd their Lives and Fortunes for her Majesty's Title; and since it can't be controverted, that the Deliverance of *Ireland* from the late King *James*, with his *French* and *Irish* Cut-throats, was chiefly owing to them.

Country-m. Certainly you are in the Right, Master; And whatever Arts some People may use to lessen our Apprehensions of another Invasion, I am of Opinion, that the *French* King and the Pretender have too much Encouragement for it; and that Her Majesty, as my Lord *Haversham* said, may be in Hazard of being dethron'd, if those, who foment such Divisions, and insult Her Laws in *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, pass unpunish'd, and be suffered to act in this Manner.

Obs. Let those Men declaim in God's Name, *Roger*, against the Murder of King *Charles*, and the barbarous Regicide, as much as they please; but I think there is no Reason they should be allow'd to run down our Constitution, of which they are very uncapable Judges. I am particularly scandaliz'd at their making that a national Sin, which the Nation, by their Representatives, oppos'd, till they were broke up by Military Force in a Tyrannical Manner, as is own'd by 12 *Car.* 2 Cap. 30. when they had voted, *That King* Charles *the I.'s Concessions were a Ground of Peace, and were accordingly treating with him*; therefore, since contrary to the very Letter of that Act, which takes Notice, *That the Fanatick Rage of a few Miscreants, who were as far from being true Protestants, as from being true Subjects, stands imputed by our Adversaries to the whole Nation*, they will needs charge the Nation with it, to me it's plain, that those who do so, are, in the Sense of that Act, the Nation's Enemies.

Country-m. In my Country Opinion, Master, they might as well charge any Man with being guilty of murthering himself and his Family, in Case his Servants, into whose Hands he put Arms for the Defence of them against High-way-men, or House-breakers, should, contrary to their Duty, and the Trust repos'd in them, make Use of those Arms to murder him and his Family, in order to possess themselves of his Money and Goods.

Obs. Why, truly, *Roger*, I think your Comparison not amiss, since that Act does plainly say, "That a 'Party of wretched Men, (meaning *Cromwell* and 'others) that were entrusted with Command in the 'Parliament's Army, threw down all the Bulwarks and 'Fences of *Law*; subverted the very Being and Con'stitution of Parliament; seduc'd Part of the Army, 'and kept the rest in Subjection, 'till by these, and 'other more odious Arts and Devices, they strength'ned themselves both in Power and Faction; seized 'the King and the House of Commons; secluded and 'imprisoned some Members, forc'd out others; and 'there being left but a small Remnant of their own 'Creatures, not a tenth Part of the whole sought to 'shelter themselves under the Name of a Parliament. Now, *Roger*, this being plain Matter of Fact, as appears by the History of those Times, and asserted by the Authority of a High-Church Parliament, if those hot headed Priests had the least spark of Truth or Modesty, they would not charge that upon the Nation, which they could not help, no more than you or I could do, if our Servants should surprize and tie us Hand and Foot, and murder our Wives and Children before our Eyes; and since that Parliament charges the execrable Murder of King *Charles* the I. upon a few Miscreants, who were far from being true Protestants, or true Subjects, is it not downright Sedition, to charge it upon the whole Body of Dissenters, who are tolerated by Law, as true Protestants, and sign the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, tho they differ from her about Government and Ceremonies? And when 'tis manifest to the World, that they are true Subjects, and universally own her Majestie's Title, and declare for the Protestant Succession, as being both good in Law, without covering themselves, as many of those Priests do, under the knavish Distinction of swearing to Her only as Queen *de facto*, while they look upon the Pretender to be King *de jure*. But if they will still charge the Nation with the Guilt of that Murder, it were easy to prove, that their own Faction had the largest Share in it, by preaching and writing down Parliaments, by possessing the King with an Opinion, that he might levy Money without them; that the Subjects ought to pay it on Pain of Damnation, by representing the Arch-bishops, *Abbot* and *Williams*, and other moderate Church-men, with all the Puritans, as Traytors and Rebels; by treating the Parliament it self as such; and by perswading the King to enter the House of Commons, whilst arm'd Men stood without in the *Lobby*, to have seiz'd such Members as spoke for the Constitution: which, to every Man that is for preserving our Government by King or Queen, Lords and Commons, must needs make that Faction, who are branded by our Parliament as Men of arbitrary Principles and restless Passions, to be raging fanatical Miscreants, perhaps and scarce, of a lower Seize, than those who murder'd King *Charles* the I. towards which they laid so deep a Foundation.

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